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About the Use of the Word “Market” in the Teaching of Economics: The Lexicon at Work at the High School and at the University

In France, syllabuses and teachings of economics have changed a lot in first degrees and at the high school as well since their creation. Wondering whether this imperceptible transformation does not lead finally the subject towards a regression as for its ambitions, by impoverishing it, we analyse these evolutions. Concentrating our work on the word “market”, which has got a considerable place so much in the syllabuses of the high school and Bachelor's degree today, we show that this whole transformation is a lexicon effect. We support our reflection by analysing syllabuses and textbooks.

We show that market has become a keyword in the lexicon of our society ; that is the reason why its use is obvious at the present time, and does not need an accurate definition. That is what we call a lexicon effect. But it poses questions about the impoverishment of the teaching of economics at high school and university, as many controversies testify.

It would be necessary to make sure of a true “knowledge growth in teaching” (Shulman, 1986), by questioning content and relationships to knowledge such as ways of teaching. The involvement of teachers in this kind of approach should be encouraged. In other words, research on dynamics of knowledge should be initiated. On which conditions is it possible?

En France, les programmes et l'enseignement de l'économie ont beaucoup changé au niveau des licences universitaires comme au lycée depuis leur création. Face à la question de savoir si cette lente transformation ne conduit pas finalement la discipline vers une régression quant à ses ambitions, en l'appauvrissant, nous cherchons à expliquer ces changements. Concentrant notre travail sur le terme « *marché* », qui a aujourd'hui une place considérable tant dans les programmes de SES que de licence d'économie, nous montrons que toute cette transformation est un effet de lexique. Nous appuyons notre réflexion sur l'analyse des programmes et l'étude des manuels.

Nous montrons ainsi que « *marché* » est devenu un mot-clé du lexique de notre société, c'est pourquoi son usage va de soi aujourd'hui, et ne nécessite pas de définition précise. C'est ce que nous appelons un effet de lexique. Mais cela pose des questions sur l'appauvrissement de l'enseignement de l'économie au lycée et à l'université, comme en témoignent de nombreuses controverses.

Il serait nécessaire de s'assurer d'un véritable « développement de la connaissance dans l'enseignement » (Shulman, 1986), en interrogeant les contenus et les rapports à la connaissance ainsi que les façons d'enseigner. L'implication des enseignants dans ce type d'approche devrait être encouragée. En d'autres termes, une recherche sur la dynamique de la connaissance est à initier. À quelles conditions est-ce possible?

Keywords:

Economics, didactics, syllabuses, subject matter contents, cultural dynamics.

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1 Introduction

The teaching of economics is the object of numerous debates at present. Movements such as “*Autism in economics*”, “*the French Association of Political Economics*”, “*the appalled economists*”, “*PEPS-Économie*” plead for other ways of teaching the subject matter. These debates are not new. They have already shaken the profession at the end of the 60s when first degrees in economics, at the university, and the teaching of “*Sciences Économiques et Sociales*” (Economics and Social Sciences, from now on called SES), at the high school, (Le Merrer, 1995) have been set up. At the end of the second world war, questions relating to the teaching of economics have been subject to deep controversies (Aréna, 2000).

Beyond these debates, we must underline that syllabuses and the teaching of economics have changed greatly at first degree and at high school level since their creation. Wondering whether this imperceptible transformation may lead the subject to regress by impoverishing its ambitions, we attempt to explain this evolutionary process. Which elements, as regards high school or university syllabuses, justify the process and

explain its direction? We are going to show that this whole transformation is a lexicon effect.

To do this, we shall concentrate on the word "*market*", which has considerable importance in the syllabuses of SES and Bachelor degrees today.

In support of our argument we shall use two materials. At the level of the high school, we support our reflection by analysing syllabuses as defined by the ministry but also by examining textbooks, which refer to the implementation of these syllabuses. We cover the period from the beginning of the teaching of SES at the high school, at the end of the 60s, until today.

At the university level, we have based our work on the textbooks in the title of which the expression "*principle of economics*" appears, in French editions. This choice is guided by two elements. First, works of economics exist for a very long time. Simply, and it is not a detail, the first authors spoke about "*political economy*". Without going back inevitably to Montesquieu, Say's works (1803), Ricardo's (1817) and Malthus' (1820) marked the discipline - economics - and were very often referred to during teaching. This former existence allows us to make comparisons, in particular in the changes in subject content. In other words, it will allow us at the same time to see the consequences of deleting the adjective "*political*" but also to see more recent transformations. Then, the works concerning "*principles of economics*" have sufficient ambition to correspond with those of SES textbooks, that is to say they try to grasp the economy in all its dimensions.

2 The place of the notion of market in the teaching of economics

Considering both school and university textbooks, the use of the term "*market*" seems to be obvious today. Let us start with observing it in SES, at the high school, from the 80s, before considering the evolution at the university.

2.1 An enhanced place at the high school

It should be established at the outset that the notion of market is missing in the early syllabuses. Furthermore, even after its introduction in 1981, its place remains quite small during the period 1981-1990, as shown by a careful reading of three fifth-form textbooks.

In one textbook (Echaudemaison, 1981) '*market*' does not appear in any title or subtitle and the index contains only a single cross-reference. It does not concern enterprise, as expected from the syllabus, but "*prices*", and more exactly "*inflation*". We could expect indeed the reference to the market in the treatment of the theme of "*enterprise*", as much as in that of the theme of "*national economy*".

It is nevertheless the study of enterprise that is supposed to involve recourse to the notion of market. This recourse turns out to be marginal, on examination.

This textbook places the market in a marginal place, leaving the professors, and the pupils, to define it, if need be.

In another textbook (Brémond, 1984), which deals with the same syllabus, "*market*" appears in the index. The

notion is introduced into the study of "*price formation*", within the theme of "*national economy*". The chapter contains a double page (Brémond, 1984, pp. 282-283) entitled "*Marks for analysis*", which begins with an extract from Jevons (1888), under the title "*What is a market?*". But this text does remind us of the historical origin of the market concept, speaking of "*any body of persons who are in intimate business relations and carry on extensive transactions in any commodity.*"

Afterwards in this textbook the Ministry of Economy explains that "*market is the meeting place between supply and demand*". This definition, frequently quoted in particular by the pupils, reminds us that in the reality of teaching, and especially in the models, other meanings of the term are usually mobilized.

In 1990 the new edition of the first textbook (Echaudemaison, 1990), places the market concept at the heart of the study of enterprise even though the syllabus does not require it at that time. Indeed to treat the theme "*enterprise*", file n°4 is entitled "*Enterprises and markets*". From the introduction we learn that the second part will be dedicated to "*markets*" and the "*law of supply and demand*", presented as an axis of study, whereas the market is defined as "*meeting place between supply and demand of a good which results in price formation and in the determination of the exchanged quantity.*"

The market concept seems to have become essential. But we must note that in the chapter of this textbook the part dedicated to it is reduced compared with the earlier edition, and the synthesis of the chapter, the page 98, reflects that, by granting more or less six times less place to the second part, that it summarizes under the title "*The necessity of competition in the market economy*". Among five documents – five to be compared with 26 dedicated to the previous part - only one can be considered as extract of an academic work, - in this particular case Chevalier (1984) -. Under the title "*What is a market ?*", this extract so begins : "*To qualify the functioning of the capitalist economies, we use frequently the term of market economy.*".

The end of the synthesis shows well that the semantic sliding still meets obstacles:

"(...) *We should not forget however that in capitalist countries the competition is also at the origin of economic crises which are translated into unemployment and poverty.*"

Today's approach is quite different: "*market*" is from now on at the heart of the SES lexicon.

Let us remind ourselves that neither the initial programs nor the Official Instructions which accompany them mention the notion of market.

The history of SES reminds us of the five stages of the adoption of this notion in the subject matter content:

1. The notion of market was put on the fifth form syllabus in 1981;

2. It was put on the sixth form syllabus in 1987, but still stays descriptive: "*Exchanges: markets, price formation, role of the outside world*";

3. It is put on the same syllabus, in a theoretical sense this time (market, supply and demand, pure and perfect competition);

4. The key-stage of the sixth-form syllabus, in 2001: at the same time as the treatment of the financing of the economy introduces the notion of "*market financing*", the "*coordination by the market*" becomes a main title within the syllabus. Also registered are the notions of "*market institutionalization and market relationships*". For the final year of high school, the notion of market was put on the syllabus in 2002.

Finally the new, current, syllabuses integrate the strengthened single notion as a core notion: in the fifth-form there appears, for the first time, a theme entitled "*markets and prices*"; in particular, the theme "*coordination by the market*" is placed in the centre of the syllabus of the sixth-form, involving the study of "*market institutions, property rights*", alongside a set of notions stemming from microeconomic models, of perfect or imperfect competition.

The effect is perceptible in the current textbooks we examined. What is talked about, concerning the market?

- Exchange in its normal form, and a regulation mechanism at the economy-wide level, more often than not described as a market economy, because the criterion accepted in order to speak in such a way is the form of exchange.
- Conditions of existence and working of this market: institutions such as right of property – and sometimes money – « *principle* » of competition, often reduced to its « *perfect* » form. Possibly the market is called « *embedded* » in social relations, but without consequence on the theoretical plane, and even more on the semantic one.

This approach to the economy via the notion of the market, relatively recent in SES textbooks, can be compared with that of the evolution of academic textbooks dealing with principles of economics.

2.2 The place of the notion of market in university textbooks

In all the studied university textbooks, the notion appears on numerous occasions and is frequently mobilized as a basis of explanation for the phenomena being considered. The counterpart of this use is the notion of "*market economy*".

The market economy is very often presented in opposition to the economies described as managed or planned, such as the USSR and Eastern European countries experienced. We find it in the textbooks of Samuelson and Nordhaus (2005) and Mankiw (1998). This approach to the various types of economic organization is not new. As a reminder, until the 8th

edition (1970), Paul Samuelson predicted a possible overtaking of the American GDP by the GDP of the USSR in the period 1990-2000; that implies that he considered this model as more successful at the economic level, and he was not the only one at that time.

If our society functioned according to market forces, we would be in a "*market economy*". For Sloman and Wride (2012), "*the market economy refers, according to the French economist Guesnerie, to a context of the economy where a substantial part of the activity is organized around markets*" (p. 21).

We can observe how obvious the use of "*market*" is on three levels.

In the first place, the notion is frequently used without preliminary definition in these textbooks. The forewords of the works testify to such a practice. So, Samuelson and Nordhaus (2005, p. 11), assert "*dozens of countries rejected the socialist and collectivist approach to adopt the system of the market*". Let us pass, for the moment, on the aspect a priori unique to this system, to underline that the recourse to this term of market does not seem to require any prior clarification. The absence of an initial definition of the concept does not mean that this one will not be proposed later. It proves that for these authors, the term is supposed to be known by everybody and that its use does not raise any questions. Thus on the site of Insee (French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies), it is possible to find a set of definitions concerning the concepts used in the various measures and the publications of this institute. The internet site www.insee.fr provides no definition of the term "*market*", nevertheless using it freely.

Secondly, the accurate definition of the term "*market*", namely the definition which people must understand, is not found in all the textbooks. For some, it is necessary to give it, while others do not seem to require it (Sloman and Wride, 2012).

Thirdly, the definition of the concept is quite difficult. Examining textbooks, it is possible to find perceptible differences, without reference to alternative definitions. The following table illustrates this.

Table 1: About the definition of market in economic literature

Author's name(s)	Definition of market
Sloman and Wride (2012)	None
Stiglitz, Walsh (2006)	Economists consider there is a market every time there is exchange. (p. 11)
Mankiw (1996)	A group of buyers or sellers for a particular good or service (p. 960).
Samuelson and Nordhaus (2001)	A device which leads buyers and sellers to meet to fix the price and the exchanged quantity of a good (p. 749).

Reading these few definitions shows that the market is either an exchange – Stiglitz (2006, p. 15) warns the reader that the term "*market*" has a specific meaning which is not the one of the ordinary language and that "*strictly speaking places where are exchanged goods and*



services" do not exist. -, or a group, or a device, but no author indicates the three ones at once.

The comparison of Malthus's (1820), Heertje's (1982) and Mankiw's (1996) work confirms the general evolution previously evoked for SES textbooks and especially allows us to measure how much the notion of market seems to have become really essential.

The comparison between SES textbooks and past and present main works in economics reveals a similar evolution, in particular in the systematic recourse to the notion of market and in the disappearance of some concepts such as *value* and *money*. Does theoretical knowledge justify this evolution?

3 Theoretical knowledge does not bear out this evolution

The examination of two dictionaries suitable for the teaching of economics, both at the high school and the university, Beitone's (2007) and Guerrien and Gun's (2012), helps us to consider more carefully this use of the notion of market and this recourse to the expression "*market economy*".

Beitone's dictionary proposes an entry word "*market*", where we learn that:

"In the economic sense, a market is an abstract place, where supply meets demand, resulting in exchanges at market prices. There are markets for all saleable goods and every market gives rise to the formation of a price."

The French economist, François Perroux, complements this by connecting the market to enterprise, making it the SES program for the fifth form, at the beginning of the 80s. The text refers back to other terms: markets and price, the market economy, the economics of organizations, market equilibrium, competitive equilibrium.

Let us consider two elements of this definition:

1. The market is an "*abstract*" place;
2. Every market gives rise to the formation of a "*price*".

Both terms must be clarified. "*Abstract place*" means, in contrast to a "*concrete*" place, the idea of a "*place*", on which are conferred such characters, by an abstract work. It is thus important to keep in mind this epistemological status and the characters which define this "*place*".

The concept of the market, so defined, involves the one of price, which is consequently to define. We read that the entry word "*price*" is, for the good or the service, "*the monetary expression of its exchange value*", which confirms that we cannot speak about the market without speaking about money or about value.

If we follow the cross-reference in the entry word "*markets and prices*" (Beitone, 2007, p. 307), the introduction is significant there:

"The market economies are the object of a global consensus today and the planned economies have become exceptions. (...)".

The absence of reference to the abstraction, this time, creates confusion, between the expression "*market economy*", and this reality that it is supposed to refer to, which would be "*the subject of a consensus*", and it creates some doubt as to what is, exactly, the subject of a consensus.

From then on, in the continuation of the text, this confusion recurs. When this introduction ends by indicating that "*other ways were explored by the heterodox analyses*", we stay on the idea that these analyses conform to the initial assertion. Having returned to the classical school, which "*tried to demonstrate the superiority of an economic organization based on competitive markets*", then in the neo-classical theory which, "*with other concepts and other hypotheses*", "*extends the work of the classics*", the text holds as "*heterodox*" analyses – which is eloquent – those of Marx, Keynes, the school of the Regulation, the neo-institutionalists – what is also very significant – and the socioeconomics (implicitly spared by the differences of analysis).

It is then advisable to go to the entry word "*market economy*". We find there a distinction between two meanings:

"On the theoretical plane, (...) a model where the regulation takes place by the confrontation of supply and demand in a market or a set of markets. (...) On the historical plane, (...) economies which work mainly on the basis of the regulation by the market. (...)".

The market economies are thus complex economic systems where the logic of the market is certainly dominant, but where exist other forms of regulation."

Without developing here the criticisms of epistemological order which this presentation raises, let us hold a particular conception, which maintains us on the "*theoretical*" plane, whatever the presentation suggests, even in going on the "*historical plane*", by favouring the criterion of the trade regulation to characterize "*economic systems*".

It is moreover confirmed, implicitly, in the same dictionary, in the entry word "*capitalism*", to which sends back the entry word "*market economy*". It is told that the market is thus "*the procedure which provides the coordination of these individual decisions by the mechanism of prices*", contrary to what takes place in the non-market economies where the coordination – is it nevertheless a problem in these societies? – "*is provided by the tradition, the social standards, the relations of power or kinship.*"

At the entry word "*capitalism*" we learn that:

"Capitalism is an economic system which rests on the relationship between wage-earners and owners. It is characterized by a logic of accumulation of capital."

And anticipating logically the raised questions, this entry word proposes a further clarification:

"You should not confuse capitalism and market economy. A market economy can work on the basis of

exchanges between independent producers. In practice, certain authors use the term "market economy" referring to the capitalist economies, because they consider that the term "capitalism" has a too Marxist connotation."

It is necessary to avoid the denounced confusion, obviously, but the confusion is already epistemological, in the last sentence quoted at the moment: "*market economy*" is recognized as a way of speaking about "*capitalism*" without referring to it. Oscillating, as the entry word "*market economy*", between definition, theoretical, and historical description given for syncretic, this presentation ends in the description of "*various forms of capitalism*" in the history. Yet this one does not fail to indicate that the "*trade and banking capitalism*" supposed to have developed from the end of the Middle Ages, "*only represents, according to the historian Fernand Braudel, a limited aspect of economic life.*" Yet everything contributes, in the various entries, to underline that the central criterion of definition of a "*system*" is the mode of regulation (Baschet 2004).

If we link now the beginning of the entry word "*markets and prices*", quoted above, and the latter statement, it appears that today the lexicon tends to impose a representation of economies as "*market economies*". In spite of efforts to prevent the confusion between "*capitalism and market economy*", this last expression, the use of which developed for a recognized ideological reason above, stands out as the way of referring to these "*complex economic systems*". To summarize, it follows that:

1) The notion of market remains to specify: place, process ? The relation with the value, and money, must be clarified to think about equivalence. As Guerrien and Gun remind it, "*Models [neo-classical, in this particular case] have difficulty taking money into account in its role of means of transaction, insofar as it is the expression of a social relationship, based in particular on confidence.*"

2) Its reach exceeds the only theoretical stake. Since at this level it is a question of conceiving and explaining the regulation of economies, conceived as "*systems*", appears a stake clearly identified as ideological, without conclusions being drawn, for lack of epistemological clarification.

Let us focus on the stake. Considering Guerrien and Gun (2012, pp. 320-322), in their dictionary, as the recent SES syllabuses, we find that speaking about market involves recognition of the necessity of the right to property, individual, on the object of any "*market*", but also the monetary character of the exchange. Yet, as soon as it becomes possible for an individual at the same time to alienate something which is his "*own*" and to exchange it for money, the accumulation of capital, and its development, also become possible for the same movement. So for example the transformation of natural elements into goods for the increase in value of capital, involving the use of wage-earning manpower, brings

labour exploitation at the same time as private enrichment.

But everything will depend on the way we recognize, exactly, the necessity of the right to property. The place taken by "*New Institutional Economics*" in SES references has facilitated the presentation of this right as a necessity, without going out of the neo-classical frame. The same applies to the monetary character of market exchange: it can go no further than the evocation of money there "*as facilitator of the exchanges*".

Guerrien's text (2003) confirms at the same time the normative stake in the neo-classical conception of the market and the confusion that it creates around this word. He reminds us that the neo-classical economists chose to abandon any reflection on value, without which the price formation remains inexplicable, for the benefit of a model which imposes a system of markets, organized by a central authority, as the only conceivable representation, thanks to the efficiency and the optimality which this theory attributes to it.

In spite of the absence of results that match the claims of the model, this double quality turns the market into an ideal figure of the economy, favouring the tendency to treat new things or activities as market goods, even though it would involve, ultimately, such an organization that market procedure loses its *raison d'être* (Guerrien, 2003). And the confusion established between the market and perfect competition eventually filled most of the speeches which aim to be critical, as shown by a close scrutiny of SES textbooks.

The example of the "*market*" in CO2 emissions (Harribey, 2013, p. 294 and following ones) shows in fact the weakness of the thesis of market regulation: the aforementioned market, provided that it "*works*", involves the collective intervention, and not only the "*interactions between individuals*".

This scrutiny of academic and school textbooks highlights the following features:

1) The political economy does not need to speak of market: the classics - and Marx - did without, and everything depends on the approach since;

2) Speaking of the market seems to have become imperative with the hegemony of microeconomics, in other words the neo-classical approach, in its diversity;

3) But the given definition remains rather vague to underpin rather loose use;

4) Especially as the question of the price formation is not investigated more deeply;

5) Which is understandable, given the difficulty of doing it in this theoretical frame, without reflection on the value;

6) The claim to do with market the heart of regulation of contemporary economies has got no theoretical ground;

7) The neo-classical economists are even obliged to integrate notions from alternative approaches, such as "*institution*", without avoiding criticism.

Beyond the differences in the definitions of the notion of market, we have to admit that in universities and high

schools, its teaching does not seem to create difficulty. Although this is obvious, it is nevertheless a source of some questioning, in particular as to hidden meanings connected to this use.

4 What interpretation on these evolutions?

It is undeniably true that the contents of textbooks and syllabuses in SES at the high school and those of textbooks at the university have changed.

The evolution of textbook content at the university and at the high school can give rise to several interpretations. Some do not totally exclude others.

First of all, it is possible to conceive that the object of economics has changed. Its definition does not make for unanimity among economists. This is true in both the past and the present. There is nothing new in this point of view. Many former authors are quoted in approaching this question. This reference confirms that, contrary to what could be put forward, the object of the subject has not changed.

Another argument could be found in the field of current events. They are changeable, so that textbooks must be brought up to date. However, the writing and the publishing of textbooks takes time. Topical questions can change considerably. Besides, one of the virtues of an academic textbook - in particular of principles of economics - is to free itself from topical questions, in order to deal with all questions. It is the same for SES textbooks. They aim not only to throw light on topical questions. They also aim to train pupils in economic reflection generally. Both kinds of textbooks try in reality to train more economists than specialists in the topical questions of a certain time, especially as the latter change regularly. As for syllabuses, the knowledge of the process of their elaboration (Coléno, 2005) allows to minimize strongly the place of this issue.

An argument in favour of the excessive use of the notion of market is the principle of reality. So, in his reflection on the teaching of economics in higher education, Jean-Paul Fitoussi (2001, p. 19) noticed :

" *We live in a market economy which we should try to understand, even if we "do not love" markets.* " Without talking any longer about our "love" for markets, let us stress what Fitoussi means : the world changes and thus it is necessary to develop our tools to become aware of it. This position raises two questions. First of all, as we noticed previously, the world did not change to a great extent - at least in the global functioning - even though it evolved. For some economists, and not inevitably Marxists, we live in a social system which we can always call capitalism. Thomas Piketty (2013, p.16) in his study on the evolution of the disparities for the XIXth century and on their perspectives for XXIst century does not hesitate to write: "*Capitalism produces mechanically unbearable, arbitrary disparities, questioning the meritocratic values on which our democratic societies develop.*". So, according to him, the current system differs little from the one that prevailed in previous centuries. Finally, the model that supports current textbooks dates from the XIXth century. It is far from

new and refers back to a singular economic approach: the neo-classical one.

Another argument - in particular in the words of some - focuses on advances in the subject. Sweeping and generalizing speeches like "*economists say*", "*economists think*", can suggest that today there would be a relatively unified discipline, in particular for the concepts to be mobilized. According to this logic, it would be advisable to draw the following conclusion: teaching economics as a science consists in teaching only the current theories because they would "be the best". Nevertheless, this position may be strongly contested, especially because it remains a large plurality of theories (Solans, 2005).

A last argument is put forward which could be summarized in the following way: the dominant ideas are the object of a fight and today some of a certain category of the population would prevail. So, Joseph Stiglitz (2012), in order to explain the evolution of the disparities, evokes the fact that political decisions, taken in recent years in the United States, mainly benefited the richest 1%. This was possible, always according to him, because this group won the "*battle of the ideas*" and this victory can be perceived in particular at the level of education.

Our position is different. Subject matter contents must be conceived as the product of a dual process of didacticisation and of axiologisation of reference knowledge, in particular scientific, (Dévelay, 1995). Speaking of axiologisation of contents means that the latter are linked with a value system, and it leads us to consider the determining factors of the dynamics of this one, to explain how this dynamics acts in turn on the contents.

It leads to analyse the evolution of contents not only as the product of an evolution of the reference knowledge, in this particular case those of economics, but at the same time and inextricably as a product of the evolution of the value system at work in the studied society. More exactly, the evolution of subject content is analysed as a "*mark of the sense*" (Solans, 2005), by referring these contents to a determined lexicon, that of the social form, the capitalism in this particular case, at a certain point of its trajectory. With this end in view we look in particular for the explanation of the evolution of this lexicon in the dynamics of the circulation of work, at the origin of this trajectory. We also refer to Raymond William's works which agree with the precedents by "*historical semantics*".

These contents carry thus the "*mark of the sense*" of capitalism at a point of its trajectory. But where does this sense come from?

A social form is an ordered set of places. What we call sense is the axis of the system, which gives it direction: set of values and collective ways of thinking and behaving. In other words, sense is culture, sense informs every being, saying what to do and how to get it right. And it does it through words: sense becomes *lexicon*, that is to say the set of words by which people think about the world, in a society at some point in its history. (Solans, 2005).

Today the lexicon of the social form is based on a central value, which is comfort. Alexis de Tocqueville

(1835) witnesses the change of the central value, from the glory – central value of the feudalism – to the comfort, or material well-being :

"If it seems useful to you to lead the intellectual and moral activity towards the necessities of material life, and to use it for producing comfort ; (...) if, at last, in your opinion, the main object of government is not giving the whole nation as much force or much glory as possible, but providing everyone with the most comfort, and sparing him the most poverty ; so make conditions equal, and set up the government of democracy."

This lexicon consists of registers, according to an order which varies throughout the trajectory of the capitalism, hence the necessity of linking the analysis of the lexicon to that of the dynamics of social relationships.

4.1 At the heart of the "economic culture": a society of individuals connected by markets

Analyses of socioeconomic dynamics (Canry, 2005; Solans, 2008), show us that the interplay of the behaviour of wage-earners and capital owners led capitalism from one stage to another, on its trajectory, and thus made the lexicon change. While previously the position of strength of wage-earners had made first the register of equality, we went to a stage where the registers of freedom and distinction, in a variable order, took its place. The renewal of the lexicon appears in some keywords, the first of which is "market".

The superiority of the market as a regulator - through the notion of coordination - is then understandable in subject matter content by the strength of this word in the current lexicon: it is indeed the keyword of the register of freedom, from now on first in front of the register of equality. The reality of 'market' as means of social regulation is never questioned, it is obvious. The following quotation shows this, extracted from the speech given February 23rd of 2010 to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris by Michel Pébereau, also a member of the High Council of Education, and the committee Guesnerie which had worked in 2008 on the teaching of SES:

"By this time when some people talk about a French cultural exception, we had better do a pedagogical work with our students, similar to that made by companies for 20 years with their employees, to make them feel the constraints of liberalism and improve their competitiveness, by subscribing to the project of their company. Therefore I stand up today for teaching where competition is the rule of the game, where creating wealth is a prerequisite for distributing wealth, and where the market provides the regulation of the economy every day. These are easy concepts, that young French people must learn and understand, as well as now the billion of Chinese people and the billion of Indian people."

Closely akin seem words of Luc Chatel, former French minister of Education, evoking an "obvious lack of

economic culture". Therefore the new subject matter of "Fundamental Principles of Economics and Management" - in fifth-form – had to "show the enterprise in its role of economic player, creator of wealth, in all its dimensions, including the social one." It is worth noting that Jean-Paul Fitoussi, besides producing in 2001 a report to the government on the teaching of economics at the university, disputes that "the population does not understand economics", and doubts that "if the French people became reconciled with the market economy, the economy would get better. (...) It is a rather flimsy reasoning." (Interview of Jean-Paul Fitoussi and Sylvain David (president of the APSES), in the newspaper Libération, on February 2nd, 2008). Our idea of an influence of socioeconomic dynamics on the lexicon of the society, and through it on the scientific speeches seems to converge with the words of Gilles Dostaler (2009) on the marginalist "revolution" of the XIXth century:

"We could [also] put forward the hypothesis that it is the rise of Marxism and the first electoral successes of the socialist parties which led, after the birth of what some [economists] called a new paradigm, to the hardening of the latter, and a withdrawal into the exalting of market virtues."

Even putting the creation of money on the SES syllabus – as the last question of the economic part for sixth-form - seems "framed" in terms of market issues. Not only is this question treated after that of the coordination by the market, but also the study of credit and financing of the economy precedes it: money creation seems thus secondary in this financing. The so-called Complementary Indications of the syllabus confirm it: "We shall show the central role of the money market." The Keynesian issues, in particular, appear clearly "out of season" as to the syllabus, in other words "out of season" as to the so-called "economic culture".

The examination of textbooks confirms what we call a "lexicon effect". That is to say a process by which, related to the combined dynamics of capitalist relationships and value systems, the ways of speaking and representing the world, in other words the lexicon of the social form, integrate a word or an expression, initially a concept, by taking it away and then by separating it from its theoretical matrix - abandoning any reference, shifting the meaning - until it becomes the only way of speaking, relegating all the others to the unspeakable and thus the inaudible.

The strength of the lexicon, through the assertion of market as an indisputable reality, also finds a way in presenting the notion of "human capital" on the fifth-form SES syllabus, and its introduction into the syllabus of final year of high school among the "types of capital" at the origin of economic growth.

The introduction of this notion shows a lexicon effect, according to our examination of textbooks, from the oldest ones up to the current editions :

1) Before any additions to the syllabus, the notion of human capital appeared recently in two fifth-form SES textbooks (Cohen 2000 ; Nivière 2008), and one sixth-

form (Revol et Silem 2001). It is worth noting nevertheless that the textbook of Belin publishers – for sixth-form – presents a reference to the notion of human capital at the end of the chapter dealing with "market failures". It appears however at the end of the chapter in a page entitled "Meeting point: SES and English", and consists of the picture of the cover of a OECD publication entitled "*Human capital*" and accompanied with questions in English such as « *Why is the picture of a baby associated with the idea of Human Capital?* ». The definition of the notion appears in a box entitled «*Going further*»: it «*refers to the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value. It is the attributes gained by a worker through education and experience.*»

2) In final year of high school, in the same scenario, it appeared from 1995 in four collections (Belin, Bordas, Bréal et Hachette), in 1999 in two others (La Découverte et Nathan), and in 2003 in two others more (Hatier et Magnard);

A lexicon effect is conceivable in the references we found, seen the given definitions and the use of the notion, as well as the frequent origin of the documents, extracted from OECD publications.

The use of the notion seems to be obvious, so much so that it exempts the authors from clarifying theoretical points, and all the more from the slightest putting in debate.

A striking example appears in the fifth-form textbook of Nathan publishers (Echaudemaison, 2010), dealing with the current program.

We find a new definition, compared with the one of the previous editions, but it is not the one the authors (Schultz, Becker) of this concept have given:

"According to the OECD, the human capital covers "all the knowledge, the qualifications, the skills, and the individual characteristics which facilitate the creation of the personal, social and economic well-being" (Loiseau, 2010, quoted by Echaudemaison, 2010, p.106).

Besides the reference to OECD, frequently found in the examination, this definition takes away the reflection from its first object, while this one is exactly in the centre of the issue put on the syllabus: labour.

No reference to the initial conception, anyway. Choosing OECD seems at the same time to consolidate the presentation of this notion as "common knowledge" on one hand - no reference to its theoretical genesis, supposed useless - and as indisputable. Ultimately, the given definition evokes the magic thought: "*human capital*" is the new philosopher's stone.

In the same sense we have already shown in previous research how much the idea of labour market is meaningful in the syllabuses, in the final year in particular : the labour market, according to the lexicon of our time, has become a reality, "natural". And the lexicon effect appears clearly in the examination which we have been widening to the currently used textbooks:

1. Some of them confuse downright the "*labour market*" with the standard model established by the neo-classical theory;

2. The aforementioned market being a reality, it is most of the time all about studying the way it "works";

3. When a textbook evokes the position of Keynes, it never goes as far as reminding that the latter does not speak of labour market; at the most it is written (Échaudemaison 2012) that Keynes was "*among the first economists to argue with the existence of a market such as described by the neo-classical economists.*"

4. Even in a school textbook we can find the expression "*employment market*" (Cohen 2012, p. 350). Pupils are asked: "*Why can some economists use Schumpeter's works to analyse the employment market?*"

Combining both keywords of market and capital, the lexicon of capitalism imposes its order at the heart of teaching content: every one is a capitalist, every-one a market partner. Can we content ourselves with these categories? And is the world confined to these relationships?

The term market, as used by many economists as a place of confrontation between supply and demand, sends back a certain vision of humanity. This one is implicit: its meaning is never reviewed in textbooks. Men and women are considered as calculators who try to maximize their satisfaction. They do it rationally. They are "*homo œconomicus*". Is this what we must teach? Do we all agree with such a narrow conception? In his work on the price of inequality, Joseph Stiglitz (2012, p. 389) sees two possible outcomes for the United States. They have become a "*two-tier economy*", that is to say two societies – the rich and the poor - which "*live side by side but which do not practically know each other*". If the "1%" eventually remembers that its fate is linked to the "99 %", then inequality will be reduced because it is in "*their own interest*" for dominant classes. Should only interest guide social choices?

Finally, a well known experiment in the field of game theory (Ventelou, 2001) shows that the behaviour adopted by the participants results from rules. It is about a game similar to the prisoner's dilemma (collectively each one should be cooperative but individually he should rather avoid being cooperative). This experiment showed that it did not lead to the same strategies according to the players. The students of economics adopt at once the non-cooperative strategy – the expected one. On the contrary, those of languages cooperate. However, the repetition of the game leads the latter to adopt the non-cooperative strategy. They finally behave as the model had planned it.

For Émile Durkheim (quoted by Laval, 1995, p.38) there is always, "*in the teaching of man*", an offer of an idealized image of humanity. Which humanity takes shape around the market ?

4 Conclusion

The terms used today in economic teaching are not the same as those used yesterday. This is especially true for the term 'market'. But we have shown that the sense of this term varies between authors. It should pose questions, but as we see this is not the case. Market is a keyword of the actual lexicon ; that is the reason why its use is obvious at the present time, and does not need an accurate definition. That is what we call a lexicon effect. But it poses questions about the impoverishment of the teaching of economics at high school and university, as many controversies testify.

From then on the reflections must be developed about the teaching of economics, as said Alain Legardez at the end of the 20th AEEE conference in Aix en Provence (2014). It would be necessary to make sure of a true "knowledge growth in teaching" (Shulman, 1986), by questioning content and relationships to knowledge such as ways of teaching. The involvement of teachers in this kind of approach should be encouraged. In other words, research on dynamics of knowledge should be initiated. On which conditions is it possible?

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Endnote

¹ "Pour un Enseignement Pluraliste dans le Supérieur en Économie", which means "For a Pluralistic Higher Education in Economics".